

measured through studies that track, for example, literacy rates in areas where AmeriCorps members serve as reading tutors. Such studies are being designed, Potter says. In September, research firm Aguirre International is slated to issue a report on the long-term impact of AmeriCorps' programs.

Tracking the benefits of service work on the people who join AmeriCorps is also a challenge. As with gauging a project's community impact, economists and social scientists have yet to slap a price tag on boosting participants' self-esteem, raising their job aspirations, or increasing the likelihood that they will volunteer in the future.

Adding another wrinkle to measuring benefits to participants is AmeriCorps members' demographics. Programs such as the Youth Corps recruit mostly among disadvantaged youth. When comparing kids who participate in Youth Corps to a group of their peers who didn't, gains in educational attainment or work experience show up clearly. But in evaluating AmeriCorps members, who are recruited regardless of socio-economic status and tend to be older, more educated and better off than Youth Corps members, the benefits to participants are sometimes less dramatic.

An Abt Associates study of Youth Corps programs found they did little to boost the incomes or job opportunities of white male participants when compared to white males who didn't perform a year of service. Black and Hispanic participants, on the other hand, made more money and got better jobs than their non-service counterparts.

The findings reflect a better job market for white males, says Jastrzab, not a detrimental effect of service. But without detailed explanation, the finding gave the appearance of failure.

"When the findings come around to showing different impacts on young people by race, then CNS wants to distance itself from that," says Andy Moore, a spokesman for the National Association of Service Conservation Corps. "This study was publicized in spite of CNS, not because of it."

When there really is bad news about a AmeriCorps-backed project, it doesn't necessarily mean the project loses its funding. But projects that show no interest in completing evaluations at all probably will be cut off, according to Potter.

After its first year, CNS defunded only 50 AmeriCorps grantees, and only 20 in its second year. "We don't want to be in the business of punishing programs for finding out that they have shortcomings," Potter says. "If we do that, we send the message that we don't provide an incentive for them to look hard at their program and find ways to improve it."

In order for an outcome-based approach to work "there must be consequences," argues the Congressional Institute's Climer. "Poorly performing programs must be repaired." There also have to be rewards for improvements, he says.

AmeriCorps' critics have kept CNS officials keenly aware of what will happen if the agency doesn't meet their expectations. This spring, AmeriCorps' congressional critics were disappointed by what they saw as the agency's lack of improvement in management practices and cost control, and renewed threats to kill the program if it doesn't make significant strides over the next year.

Such threats carry greater urgency in the current climate of deficit reduction.

"One of the greatest difficulties that we have is that [AmeriCorps] funds compete directly with dollars for federal housing programs, veterans benefits, the space program, natural disaster relief and more than a dozen other federal agencies," says David

Lestrang, an aide to Rep. Jerry Lewis, R-Calif., chairman of the House Appropriations subcommittee that has jurisdiction over the CNS budget. "It all comes down to a matter of priority. I know this is a priority for the administration but they have to weigh it against other priorities. For Congress, the jury is still out on AmeriCorps."

"If you focused entirely on the cost, you could justify killing any program if you never looked at the benefits," counters Waldman.

DUAL GOALS

The question of whether CNS' programs are cost-effective depends largely on how you define its goals.

In the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, the agency's mission is defined as helping "the nation meet its unmet human, education, environmental and public safety needs." But President Clinton also sold AmeriCorps as a way for young people to earn money for college.

Senator Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, a vocal AmeriCorps critic, doesn't dispute the benefits of its programs. But he questions whether it is an efficient way to help kids get to college.

Grassley "has no problem with the work AmeriCorps volunteers are doing—it's valuable work," says Jill Kozeny, one of his aides. "He has a problem with the huge burly cost structure."

Grassley has commissioned several General Accounting Office studies of CNS operations. Two years ago, a GAO study he ordered concluded that the agency was expending about \$17,000 in resources on each AmeriCorps participant. Adding state, local and private support for the program, GAO pegged average resources per participant at \$26,654. Grassley said this figure was way too high. He also blasted CNS for giving grants to other federal agencies and not garnering more private support for projects.

CNS officials say it's unfair to include other federal, state, local government, and private contributions when estimating program costs. But last year CNS chief executive Harris Wofford said he would implement a plan to require grantees with above average per-participant costs to lower them by 10 percent in the next grant cycle. Wofford also agreed to end funding to other federal agencies, which had totaled \$12 million a year for programs such as WritersCorps, a tutoring program underwritten by the National Endowment for the Arts. And he said he would raise requirements for matching private funds from 25 percent to 33 percent of a grantee's budgets. Grassley then helped save AmeriCorps funding for another year.

In March of this year, Grassley and others found more fodder for discontent in another GAO report on the role of state commissions in administering AmeriCorps. The report included costs, attrition rates, and rates of educational award usage among several AmeriCorps projects. One project, the Casa Verde Builders Program in Texas, had an attrition rate of more than 50 percent and cost \$2.5 million, half of which came directly from CNS. Grassley's office estimated costs for the program at close to \$100,000 per participant.

"We have to look at whether this program is the most cost-effective way to help people go to college," Grassley said on NBC Nightly News shortly after the report came out.

Wofford protests that AmeriCorps is not simply a scholarship program, but a national service one as well.

That is exactly what bothers some of AmeriCorps' critics, who say that the federal government shouldn't be in business of promoting service. Rep. George Radanovich, R-Calif., abhors the idea that AmeriCorps

members are in essence "paid to volunteer," according to one of his aides, Fred Greer. "The aim is worthy," Greer says. "But why does it have to be a public program from the start?"

AmeriCorps supporters counter that federal investment is a vital catalyst to boosting community service and a necessary incentive for overworked citizens to volunteer.

Still, even the most ardent AmeriCorps supporters are starting to concede that the non-government sectors have a bigger role to play in national service. At the April summit on service in Philadelphia, Clinton proposed the creation of 50,000 new AmeriCorps Challenge grants that would allow AmeriCorps to add 33,000 members over five years. The new grants would only cover the education award; private and nonprofit organizations would pick up the tab for other program costs and living expenses.

"We're extremely open-minded to ideas from all parts of the political spectrum on how to make national service work," Waldman said in an interview before he left the agency. "Outside of Washington, AmeriCorps is much more a nonpartisan issue."

Congressional opposition puts CNS officials in a bind, because they're forced to be accountable for the effectiveness of projects that they don't directly run, half of which they don't even choose to fund. "Congress set it up this way and if they believe in it they ought to take it seriously," Waldman said. "It puts us in a ridiculous position: Congress wants us to not have any control but hold us accountable."●

TRIBUTE TO THE TOWNS OF NASHUA, PORTSMOUTH AND MANCHESTER ON BEING NAMED TO MONEY MAGAZINE'S BEST PLACES TO LIVE IN AMERICA

● Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the great citizens of Nashua, NH, Portsmouth, NH, and Manchester, NH, on being named to Money magazine's best places to live in America. Nashua, NH, came in at No. 1, with Portsmouth and Manchester finishing fifth and sixth respectively based on Money magazine's rankings.

The national investment magazine released their list of America's top ten communities based on business climate, economic well-being, quality of life and other factors that comprise a positive environment in which to work and raise a family. New Hampshire's tourism industry, scenic beauty, lack of sales or income tax, low crime rate, quality education, and family and community spirit make the State attractive for families and businesses to locate here. The people of these communities, and of the entire State, have good reason to be extra proud.

Nashua, the Gate City of the Granite State, named number one by Money magazine, is the only State to receive this honor twice, of which I and the citizens are very proud. The former mill town which borders the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, has a booming economy with manufacturing facilities, hi-tech firms, and defense contractors. Nashua is also close to many cultural arts venues and major medical faculties of neighboring communities,

which make it number one as touted by Money magazine.

Portsmouth, New Hampshire's Port City, placed sixth as the most desirable place in the country. The Portsmouth community relies on many major technology and communications firms to help thrust to the forefront of the Nation. The Portsmouth community is a great place to raise a family with its many fine schools and major colleges nearby including the University of New Hampshire in nearby Durham. The Port City is also the home of one of our Nation's finest military institutions, the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.

Manchester, the Queen City, picked up the sixth place honors in the Nation. The Queen City has many high-tech firms and major telecommunications businesses which help add to the economic power of the city. Manchester sits on the banks of the Amoskeag river, the home to many of the historic manufacturing plants of the late 1800's and early 1900's. Situated in the Merrimack Valley of New Hampshire, Manchester is also home to a booming cultural arts center which is the pride of northern New England.

Mr. President, it is no surprise that New Hampshire is the only State with three towns in the top ten. I can think of no cities in America more deserving of these top honors than Nashua, Portsmouth, and Manchester. I applaud the local officials, enterprising businessmen and women, and the committed citizens of these great cities. They helped bring about an economic revival that has propelled New Hampshire into national recognition once again. I am proud to represent them all in the U.S. Senate.●

NATIONAL HOME OWNERSHIP WEEK

● Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, this week we mark the second anniversary of the National Home Ownership Week. I rise to join with my constituents and citizens across the Nation to celebrate the efforts to promote and expand the rate of home ownership in this country.

It is my view that home ownership activities foster and encourage the revitalization of neighborhoods. Home ownership stabilizes local communities by providing families with a renewed sense of civic responsibility and commitment to the well-being of their neighborhoods. In addition, home ownership is one of the single most important vehicles for personal financial growth and wealth accumulation. New home ownership encourages investment and job growth in areas where such investment has been lacking. While a majority of Americans today are homeowners, many moderate and low income families are unable to overcome the economic barriers to owning a home. The National Home Ownership Week is part of the national strategy to make the dream of home ownership a reality for these families.

Study after study has demonstrated that many families with high enough

incomes to buy homes and who may, in fact, be paying as much in rent as they would be in mortgage payments, are locked out of home ownership because they cannot generate the down payment or closing costs necessary. Helping families to surmount those barriers, and then providing them with mortgages at affordable rates so that they can become home owners, means moving those families toward long-term economic security. Therefore, it is imperative that we work to increase the availability of credit and affordable mortgages for moderate and low income families who labor to own their piece of the American dream.

The number of local events being held across the country to celebrate National Home Ownership Week now exceeds 600. In my state of Maryland, I had the privilege of attending an event in Wheaton, MD, to announce the "Home Ownership Montgomery" initiative as part of this week's celebration of home ownership activities. I was proud to stand with representatives from the Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Commission, the county government, Fannie Mae and other dedicated housing advocates. As part of the strategy to increase the number of Maryland home owners, Montgomery County has partnered with Fannie Mae to make millions of dollars of low interest loans available to low income families who need assistance with closing costs and mortgage payments. It is my hope that these efforts and numerous others will increase the current home ownership rate in Maryland from 65.9 percent to 67.5 percent, the national goal set by the National Partners in Home Ownership.

The success of National Home Ownership Week is made possible by many innovative public-private partnerships. In this age of shrinking Federal resources, partnerships have leveraged funds to support millions of dollars in home ownership activities. National organizations such as the Local Initiatives Support Corporation and the Enterprise Foundation, local nonprofits and for-profits such as Interfaith Housing of Western Maryland, and local governments have developed thousands of homes for low income families. I salute these combined efforts to rebuild local communities. At the same time, we must not forget that federal funding for affordable housing assistance and homeless individuals has been on the decline. The dream of home ownership is a dream that many families of varied incomes desire. It is my hope that National Home Ownership Week will not only help to raise the awareness of the need for increased home ownership, but at the same time, heighten the public's consciousness of the benefits of providing affordable housing for all families.●

TRIBUTE TO MACON COUNTY

● Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I rise to today to recognize Macon County—a beautiful county in my home state of Tennessee.

The people of Macon County are hard and prosperous workers who have never lost touch with their core community values, even as they have responded to our ever changing times. For instance, with their deep roots in tobacco farming, Macon County farmers have had to adapt to rapid changes in agriculture and agribusiness. For many, that has meant expanding to grow alternative crops—like sweet peppers—to remain competitive throughout the Nation.

Other residents have recognized the value of the area's natural beauty, and the county's tourism has grown as a result. Places like Union Camp Waterfall, Winding Stairs natural rock formation and Red Boiling Springs draw many visitors from Tennessee and throughout the country.

Every year Macon countians celebrate those values, the success of their community and the common bond they share in many different ways. Whether it's their award-winning county fairs or the perfect balance they have achieved between the county's unique natural features, residents of Macon County can take pride in their work and in themselves.

Mr. President, the citizens of Macon County are hardworking, forward-thinking individuals dedicated not only to the growth and success of their community, but also to the growth and success of their community spirit. I salute them all. ●

GIRL SCOUT GOLD AWARD

● Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, today I would like to salute 13 outstanding young women who have been honored with the Girl Scout Gold Award by Connecticut Trails Girl Scout Council in North Haven, CT. They are Katherine Berinato, Amy Suzanne Brink, Anne T. Dwyer, Sarah Erling, Carolyn Greeno, Paige Henninger, Bri Lyn Howell, Theresa Lacombe, Kristen A. McAree, Elizabeth Shepherd, Jennifer R. Westmoreland, Rebecca Wonneberger, and Heather Swanson. They are being honored on June 8, 1997, for earning the achievement award in U.S. Girl Scouting. The Girl Scout Gold Award symbolizes outstanding accomplishments in areas of leadership, community service, career planning, and personal development. The award can be earned by girls aged 14-17, or in grades 9-12.

Girls Scouts of the U.S.A., an organization serving over 2.5 million girls, has awarded more than 20,000 Girl Scout Gold Awards to Senior Girl Scouts since the inception of the program in 1980. To receive the award a Girl Scout must earn four interest project patches, the Career Exploration Pin, the Senior Girl Scout Leadership Award, and the Senior Girl Scout Challenge, as well as design and implement a Girl Scout Gold Award project. A plan for fulfilling these requirements is created by the Senior Girl Scout and is